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HOUSE BILL 728 By
Givens

SENATE BILL 997
By Crowe

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 58, Chapter 3, relative to county and municipal veterans service offices.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 58-3-109(a), is amended by deleting the language "veterans of all wars in which the United States participated," and by substituting instead the language "veterans of the United States armed forces,".

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 58-3-109(b), is amended by adding the following language at the end of such subsection:

Such service offices shall be staffed by accredited veterans service officers.

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 58-3-110, is amended by designating the existing language as subsection "(a)" and by adding the following as new subsection "(b)":

(b)

(1) The senior accredited officer serving in a county veterans service office may receive compensation commensurate to the compensation paid to heads of county government departments of comparable size in the county in which such officer is employed, excluding the compensation paid to certified county administrators of

elections pursuant to §2-12-209. Such compensation may be prorated to reflect the number of hours that such officer actually works during a specific pay period.

(2) Staff personnel employed by the respective veterans service offices may receive compensation commensurate to the compensation paid to county government employees in comparable positions.

SECTION 4. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 58-3-111, is amended by deleting such section in its entirety and by substituting instead the following:

Section 58-3-111.

(a) A veterans service officer shall be chosen by the governing body or bodies of the political subdivision or subdivisions creating the veterans service office by which such officer is to be employed.

(b) In case a veterans service office is created by contract between two (2) or more political subdivisions, the veterans service officer shall be approved by the governing body of each subdivision participating in the establishment of such office. If the several political subdivisions are unable to agree upon a veterans service officer, then and in that event the officer shall be designated from among the candidates proposed by the commissioner of veterans affairs.

(c) All veterans service officers shall be honorably discharged veterans of the United States armed forces. Veterans service officers shall have full powers to administer oaths and to take acknowledgments in connection with all matters falling within the scope of authority of their office and in connection with the presentation of claims and other functions incident to the obtaining of benefits for discharged veterans; but no fees of any type whatsoever shall be charged any veteran or dependent of a veteran, for services rendered by a veterans service officer.

(d) All veterans service officers shall successfully complete training and be issued accreditation by the department of veterans affairs within one (1) year from the date of

appointment. Any veterans service officer who does not complete the required training and receive accreditation within one (1) year of appointment shall be removed from office by the governing body or bodies of the political subdivision or subdivisions creating the veterans service office by which such officer is employed.

SECTION 5. It is the legislative intent that counties and municipalities that have yet to establish veterans service offices are urged and encouraged to do so, either jointly or severally, as soon as is feasible.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect July 1, 2001, the public welfare requiring it.